

August 10, 2005

ATTORNEY GENERAL UNVEILS NEW WEB-BASED SEX OFFENDER INFORMATION

BISMARCK –Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today announced new requirements for sex offenders and unveiled new internet options for the public to access information about sex offenders.

“I had received comments from members of the public that several offenders’ photographs were outdated. I agreed, but the law only required offenders to be re-photographed if they moved,” said Stenehjem. “As a result of legislative changes, I am now requiring all registered sex offenders to immediately report and get updated their photographs,” he continued.

The ND Department of Corrections, through the regional Parole & Probation offices, will assist in obtaining the offender’s information. Offenders, who are being notified by mail, will have 10 days to contact the local probation office or risk prosecution. Offenders will also be required to verify their address and employment information. Stenehjem also has directed BCI to coordinate efforts with local law enforcement agencies to locate delinquent offenders.

Stenehjem also unveiled new web-based services to provide citizens with information about sex offenders. The services are accessed from the “Sex Offender Information” link on the Attorney General’s website – www.ag.state.nd.us - and are in addition to the current sex offender website, which also can be accessed from the same link. The sex offender website (www.ndsexoffender.com) has received more than 200,000 visitors so far this year, and 664,896 since it went online in November 2001.

“More and more often, people look first to the internet for information. Recognizing that future demands for web-based information will increase, I am pleased to announce several new services to provide citizens with access to more information about sex offenders,” said Stenehjem.

Citizens can sign up to receive an e-mail notice when sex offenders move into or out of a specific city, county, or zip code, or even limit the notice to information about a specific offender. The e-mail notices are generated automatically and in “real time” as the information is updated on the sex offender database. Another new feature is the “delinquent offender” page. Concerned citizens will be able to access a list of all delinquent offenders, including the offender’s photograph and last known address.

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Although, at this time, the delinquent offender pages do not interact with the sex offender website, it is updated in real time. The Sex Offender Information page also offers links to other sex-offender related websites, including national sex offender and mapping websites. More links will be added as additional sites are established.

“The sex offender website was the first step in providing instant access to sex offender information. This is a great next step for North Dakota citizens,” said Stenehjem. “And as the state’s technology is updated, we will continue improving and expanding our web-based services,” he added. Stenehjem expects soon to add several new options to the sex offender website, including a mapping ability and active links to offender pages in e-mail notices.

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